

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-6 and 24 without prejudice to the inclusion of the subject matter contained therein in any later filed continuation and divisional application(s). Please amend claims 13 and 23 as set forth below.

Claims 1-6 (canceled)

7. (previously amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising a vertebrate Insulin-like Growth Factor I (IGF-1) coding region, operably linked to a muscle specific promoter/regulatory region, wherein said IGF-1 coding region is flanked on the 5' side by an SV40 intron sequence and wherein said IGF-1 coding region is flanked on the 3' end by an SV40 polyadenylation signal sequence.

8. (previously amended) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 7, wherein said muscle specific promoter/regulatory region is selected from the group consisting of the myosin light chain 1/3 promoter/enhancer, the skeletal α -actin promoter, the muscle creatine kinase promoter/enhancer and a muscle specific troponin promoter.

9. (previously amended) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 8, wherein said muscle specific troponin promoter is the fast troponin C promoter/enhancer.

10. (original) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 8, wherein said muscle specific promoter/regulatory region is the myosin light chain 1/3 promoter/enhancer.

11. (original) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 7, wherein said muscle specific promoter/regulatory region further comprises an enhancer element operably linked to the IGF-I coding region.

12. (original) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 11, wherein said enhancer is the myosin light chain 1/3 enhancer.

13. (currently amended) A composition comprising a recombinant virus vector comprising ~~said~~the isolated nucleic acid of claim 12.

14. (original) The composition of claim 13, wherein said recombinant virus vector is selected from the group consisting of an adeno-associated virus, an adenovirus and a herpes simplex virus.

15. (original) The composition of claim 14, wherein said recombinant virus vector is an adeno-associated virus.

16. (original) A cell comprising the isolated nucleic acid of claim 7.

17. (original) A cell comprising the recombinant virus vector of claim 15.

18. (original) A kit for increasing muscle mass and muscle strength in a vertebrate, said kit comprising a muscle enhancing dose of the isolated nucleic acid encoding IGF-I of claim 7, wherein said isolated nucleic acid is expressed in vertebrate muscle cells, and wherein said kit further comprises an applicator for delivering said muscle enhancing dose, and instructions for the use of said kit.

Claims 19-22 (withdrawn)

23. (currently amended) A method of increasing vertebrate muscle mass and muscle strength, said method comprising administering a muscle enhancing dose of an isolated nucleic acid encoding Insulin-like Growth Factor I (IGF-I) intramuscularly into a vertebrate, wherein said isolated nucleic acid is expressed in muscle cells, thereby increasing said muscle mass and said muscle strength in said vertebrate~~The method of claim 1, wherein said method~~ further comprising administering to said vertebrate fibroblast growth factor or neurotrophin.

24. (canceled)